

A Hellenistic influence in *Aeneid* IX

J.D. Reed

University of Michigan. Department of Classical Studies
Ann Arbor, MI 48109 USA
josephdr@umich.edu

and similar papers at core.ac.uk

provided by Dip

Data de recepció: 2/9/2002

Abstract

Attention to certain passages shows that the episode on the death of Euryalus in *Aeneid* IX owes much to the poetry of Bion of Smyrna, not only his *Epitaph on Adonis* but also the fragments from his poem on the Evening Star and perhaps from those on Orpheus and Hyacinthus. The result is a characteristically Hellenistic mixture of love and death.

Key words: Virgil, Bion, Nisus and Euryalus, *Aeneid*, Hellenistic poetry, Adonis.

Resum. Una influència hel·lenística a Eneida IX

Com es veu per l'estudi d'uns quants passos, l'episodi de la mort d'Eurial en *Eneida* IX té molt a veure amb la poesia de Bió d'Esmirna, no sols el seu *Epitafi d'Adonis*, sinó també la seva obra fragmentària, incloent-hi poemes sobre l'estel vespertí i possiblement Orfeu i Jacint. En resulta una barreja de l'amor i la mort típicament hel·lenística.

Paraules clau: Virgili, Bió, Nisos i Eurial, *Eneida*, poesia hel·lenística, Adonis.

Aphrodite's lament in the *Epitaph on Adonis* by Bion of Smyrna has been cited for some two hundred years as a close precedent for Juturna's lament for her own immortality (compare *Aeneid* 12.880-81 to *Adonis* 53).¹ More recently, Brenk has explored the similarities between Anchises' lament for Marcellus (*Aeneid* 6.883-4) and Bion's appeal to heap flowers on the corpse of Adonis, together with his references to crimson flowers (*Adonis* 75 with 35, 65-6); the assimilation of Marcellus to Adonis, Brenk observes, both idealizes the youthful beauty of the Roman and places «the tragic loss of Venus' descendant in the context of her earlier sorrow for the Adonis of myth.»² A similar comparison, traceable in the death of Euryalus in Book 9, is the object of the present study. I begin by looking at a series of young deaths in the *Aeneid*, including that of Euryalus, that use

1. Heyne *ad loc.*; see also Barchiesi 118 n. 27, Boella. The authorship of the *Epitaph on Adonis*, which in the MSS is anonymous or mistakenly ascribed to Theocritus, was first made by Camerarius in 1530 and is virtually certain; see Reed 15, 77-8, 194, 202.
2. Brenk 222-3 = 91-2.

imagery and wording from Bion's *Epitaph on Adonis*; then I move to echoes of Bion's fragments in the Euryalus episode, and finally, more speculatively, to potential influence from Bion's lost works. In passing I shall notice a few other recollections of Bion in Virgil's work. Since Virgil's close repetitions from Bion guarantee the place of the Greek poet in the background of the Roman epic, I move from his clearest use of Bion to his least clear (where possible I cite other poets' use of a Bionean passage to show that Virgil was not alone).

I

The general setting of the Euryalus episode parallels that of Bion's *Adonis*. In his search for Euryalus, Nisus wanders through a forest of oak trees and dense thorn bushes (9.381-2 *silva fuit late dumis atque ilice nigra / horrida, quam densi complerant undique sentes*, 393 *dumisque silentibus errat*); likewise in her search for the dying Adonis Aphrodite wanders through oak forests and dense thorn bushes: 20-22 ἀνὰ δορυμῶς ἀλάληται/πενθαλέα νήπλεκτος ἀσάνδαλος, αἱ δὲ βάτοι νιν/ἐρχομέναν κείροντι (note also the similarity in sound between *dumus* and *δορυμός*).³ The closest similarities, however, are with Bion's initial description of Adonis (*Epitaph on Adonis* 7-11):

κεῖται καλὸς Ἄδωνις ἐν ὄρεσι μηρόν δόδοντι
 λευκῷ λευκὸν δόδοντι τυπεῖς καὶ Κύπριν ἀνιῇ
 λεπτὸν ἀποψύχων· τὸ δὲ οἱ μέλαν εἴβεται αἶμα
 χιονέας κατὰ σαρκός, ὕπ' ὀφρύσι δ' ὄμματα ναρκῇ,
 καὶ τὸ ῥόδον φεύγει τῷ χεῖλεος.

With this passage the death of Euryalus shares not only turns of phrase and patterns of description, but the general tone of erotic appraisal (*Aeneid* 9.431-7)⁴:

sed viribus ensis adactus
 transadigit costas et candida pectora rumpit.
 volvitur Euryalus leto, pulchrosque per artus
 it cruor inque umeros cervix conlapsa recumbit:
 purpureus veluti cum flos succisus aratro
 languescit moriens, lassove papavera collo
 demisere caput pluvia cum forte gravantur.

The blood that runs over Euryalus' «beautiful limbs» is like the blood that runs over «beautiful» Adonis' «snowy flesh.» Both stricken parts (thigh, chest) are

3. The silence of Nisus' surroundings, explained by commentators since Servius as contrasting with the clamor he hears in the ensuing lines, also contrasts with the natural setting that loudly mourns for Adonis (31-9).
4. The similarities were first noticed, to my knowledge, by Martin (on *Ad.* 9), who also compares *Aen.* 11.67 to *Ad.* 71 and *Ad.* 40 to *Aen.* 11.39, intertexts I too shall deal with. He cites many other Latin scenes of mourning and is not concerned specifically with the imagery that we are studying.

white (λευκόν, *candida*). Both passages enumerate body parts. Virgil's flower-similes, which come from Homer and Catullus and use the red flowers commonly associated with the death of a youth, can also be considered to enlarge upon the trope whereby Bion calls the vanishing color of Adonis' lips a «rose» (11; note also the flower imagery at 35 and 76). The death of Euryalus thus anthologizes in miniature the three great traditions that Virgil's epic subsumes: the Homeric, the Latin, and the Hellenistic. Bion-like, in general, is Virgil's emphasis on Euryalus' body and its beauty. Certain elements in the Latin intensify the eroticism: *recumbit* exposes a sensuality latent in κείται (which here means primarily «lies dead or dying»), and *pulchros* recalls Adonis' characteristic epithet καλός (repeated often in Bion's poem from the first line onward). The *candor* of Euryalus' chest is not the paleness of death, but a gleaming, beckoning fairness of complexion, preserving the sensual connotations of Bion's χιονέας.

Indeed, it is the sensibility of the passage —the erotic gaze on a dying youth, reinforced by elements of the *sermo amatorius*⁵— that seems traceable to Bion (even more compellingly than any accumulation of parallel words or images), and for which Virgil adapts Bion's words even more explicitly in passages on other dying warriors. A prominent example is the death of Camilla at 11.818-19, which virtually translate *Adonis* 10-11 (as Ahrens 1855 notices):

labitur exsanguis, labuntur frigida leto
lumina, purpureus quondam color ora reliquit.

It is noteworthy that these lines pick up where the looser reworking in the Euryalus passage left off. *Frigida* even transmits Bion's odd usage of ναρκή, «go numb,» for eyes. Were we cannily to look for a displacement of the metaphor φεύγει (ousted by *reliquit*), we would find it just below in Camilla's death (831 *vitaque cum gemitu fugit indignata sub umbras*), where it replaces παμένη...βεβήκει in the Homeric model (*Iliad* 16.857 = 22.263). The verb simultaneously recalls the words of Aphrodite at *Adonis* 50-51, where φεύγεις is almost equivalent to «die»: σύ με...φεύγεις/φεύγεις...καὶ ἔρχεται εἰς Ἀχέροντα. Although *fugit* seems natural in context, and the reuse of the line for the death of Turnus (12.952) has made it even more familiar, it is a notable catachresis —a syllepsis, in fact, of Bion's two catachreses.⁶ Like those on Euryalus, the lines on Camilla impart a gaze upon physical beauty. The repeated verb *labor* makes her descent gentle, like *cervix conlapsa recumbit* in Euryalus' death; but it is the «crimson color» (*purpureus color*), a reduction of Bion's trope ῥόδον, that seems to concentrate the diffuse sensuality of the lines on her person. *Purpureus* evokes the blushing glow of youth: compare the *lumen iuventae purpureum* bestowed on

5. On individual terms see Pichon.

6. Cf. Ov. *Am.* 3.9.49 *fugientis pressit ocellos*, in an elegy deeply imbued with Bion's influence. For this sense of the verb *TLL* VI 1482.33-40 lists other post-Virgilian passages (with or without a directional phrase like «to the shades»). Ctesias *FGrH* 688 F 24 already uses πέφενγε absolutely, in the sense «is dead».

Aeneas at 1.590-91 (the *purpureus flos* to which Euryalus is compared at 9.435 has this connotation too). We are made to see the signs of Camilla's youthful beauty as they disappear forever.

Consider now Aeneas' first view of the dead Pallas (11.39-41):

ipse caput nivei fultum Pallantis et ora
ut vidit levique patens in pectore vulnus
cuspidis Ausoniae, lacrimis ita fatur obortis...

The paiderastic attractiveness (rightly noted by Servius) that is signalled by the «smooth chest» of «snowy Pallas»⁷ recalls Euryalus' *candida pectora*, and the two youths share not only the sensual imagery but also Bionean wording. Pallas' «snowiness» recalls Adonis' χιονέα σάοξ (the first attested use of that adjective for complexion)⁸; the allusive economy characteristic of Virgil's style should have made us expect to find the exact epithet elsewhere.⁹ The structure of these lines («when he saw» with the wound as object, introducing a lament in direct speech) closely follows the section of Bion's poem where Aphrodite first sees the dying Adonis (*Adonis* 40-42):

ὥς ἶδεν, ὥς ἐνόησεν Ἀδώνιδος ἄσχετον ἔλκος,
ὥς ἶδε φοίνιον αἶμα μαραιομένῳ περὶ μηρῷ,
πάχυντας ἀμπετάσασα κινύρετο, “μείνον Ἀδωνι...”¹⁰

The same structure is also evident in Aeneas' reaction to the dead Lausus (10.821-3):

at vero ut vultum vidit morientis et ora,
ora modis Anchisiades pallentia miris,
ingemuit miserans...

(The separation of Bion's ὥς ἶδεν...ὥς ἶδε —recalled by Virgil's *ora, ora*— into two instances of *ut vidit* exemplifies what Wills calls «divided allusion»). The sensual «languishing» or «wilting» thigh of Adonis in 41 implicitly likens him to a dying flower, as do lines 11 («the rose flees from his lip») and 75-6 (cast flowers on his bier: «with him, since he has died, all flowers too have wilted»). One

7. See Putnam 10-11.

8. See Papanghelis 64 on *Prop.* 2.13.53-4, where Adonis is called *niveus* in a passage that shows other debts to Bion. It is easy to imagine Virgil and Propertius discussing the Bionean passage together.

9. On Virgil's allusive economy see Wills, esp. 279-81 (in a discussion of the problems of recognizing and delimiting a «divided allusion», one diffracted into diverse parts of the imitating text) and 296-302.

10. Ovid reworks the same lines for his Adonis myth at *Met.* 10.720-21. Another Bion-influenced poem where the formula «when she saw...» persists is the late Anacreontean Εἰς νεκρὸν Ἀδωνιν 1-2 Ἀδωνιν ἢ Κυθρήρη ὥς εἶδε νεκρὸν ἦδη...

remembers Euryalus' flower-similes, especially 436 *languescit moriens*. Virgil uses this trope again at 11.67-70, where Pallas, lying on his bier, is like a plucked flower that has not yet lost its beauty:

hic iuvenem agresti sublimem stramine ponunt
 qualem virgineo demessum pollice florem
 seu mollis violae seu languentis hyacinthi
 cui neque fulgor adhuc nec dum sua forma recessit.

The voluptuous passivity of the «soft» violet and «languishing» hyacinth liken Pallas to the dying Euryalus (note the recurrence of the verb *languéo*). The motif of beauty persisting after death recalls the corresponding passage of the *Epitaph on Adonis* (68-71):

μηκέτ' ἐνὶ δοῦμοισι τὸν ἀνέρα μύρεο, Κύπρι
 οὐκ ἀγαθὰ στιβάς ἐστιν Ἀδώνιδι φυλλὰς ἐρήμα.¹¹
 λέκτρον ἔχοι, Κυθήρεια, τὸ σὸν νῦν νεκρὸς Ἀδωνίς·
 καὶ νέκυσ ὦν καλὸς ἐστι, καλὸς νέκυσ, οἷα καθεύδων.

But the real tip-off to Bion's influence at *Aeneid* 11.67-70 is Virgil's odd mention of an *agreste stramen*. The noun, unattested before this passage (*stramentum* is old), stands out, and the rustic motif is not obviously motivated in the episode; but the usage replicates Bion's peculiar use at 69 of στιβάς (normally an improvised pallet of leaves and branches) for a proper bed, in contrast to a pile of leaves, on which the dead Adonis is to be laid out.

The use of Bion intricately interconnects these scenes. In 11.39-40, for example, the specification of both Pallas' face and chest-wound as objects of Aeneas' gaze forms a bridge between Aphrodite's view of Adonis' thigh-wound (relocated to suit Pallas' condition) and Aeneas' view of Lausus' face. A similar bridge: in Camilla's death, the word *ora*, which can denote either «mouth» or «face,» neatly conflates Camilla's intertextual and intratextual *comparanda*, the lips of Adonis and the faces of Lausus and Pallas (10.821-2, 11.39). The *purpureus color* that deserts her *ora* seems to exchange the boldly concrete floral metaphor of Adonis' lips for a more abstract «crimson color» —yet when we read Camilla's death against those of the others, *purpureus* resumes distinct floral associations from the «crimson flower,» *purpureus flos*, to which Euryalus is compared (9.435). These connections could also lead us into other parts of the *Aeneid*. Pallas' wound (11.40 *in pectore vulnus*) recalls, by both wording and metrical position, Bion's description of the metaphorical «wound in the heart» that assimilates Aphrodite to her beloved (*Adonis* 16-17):

11. In 69 οὐκ is Ahrens's emendation for MS ἔστ' (presumably a dittography): see Ahrens 1854:66-7, Fantuzzi 105-6, Reed 234. Elements of 68-9 are strongly recalled by *Aen.* 11.843-4 (on Camilla's death) *nec tibi desertae in dumis coluisse Dianam / profuit...*

ἄγχιον ἄγχιον ἔλκος ἔχει κατὰ μηρὸν Ἄδωνις,
 μεῖζον δ' ἅ Κυθήρεια φέρει ποτικάρδιον ἔλκος.

We could compare the two wounds of Dido: 4.66-7 *est mollis flamma medullas / interea et tacitum vivit sub pectore vulnus* and 4.689 *infixum stridit sub pectore vulnus*. Those wounds, one metaphorical and one corporeal, harken back to the word-play of the *Epitaph on Adonis* and revise Bion's line-end ποτικάρδιον ἔλκος using Bion's own model, Theocritus 11.15 ὑποκάρδιον ἔλκος (a «window-reference»¹² in miniature). Pallas' *in pectore vulnus* changes Dido's *sub pectore vulnus* exactly as Bion's ποτικάρδιον changes Theocritus' ὑποκάρδιον.

The connection with Dido's story recalls the combination of eroticism and death found in these images and its place not only in the wider sphere of the epic, but in a Hellenistic tradition; if I have emphasized the element of direct influence in these intertextual comparisons it is to bring out the historical sense of a process, a transfigurative effect of Virgil's reading of Bion. Isolated stories of love ending in death, received from Classical tragedy and elsewhere, became in later Hellenistic hands the vehicles for a new sensibility. Clua traces in Euphorion's *Thrax* a treatment of death (alongside betrayal) as «el fruit de l'amor,» the crystallizing precedent for the stories of doomed love taken up by the «New Poets» and Ovid: «En efecte, el contrast 'amor'-'mort' esdevé un dels temes preferits dins el corrent poètic que neix a Euforió, passa a través de Parteni fins a arribar a Roma, on influeix en la formació del gust per l'horrible i macabre»¹³. Bion's Adonis and the Virgilian figures that reflect him present less a contrast than a morbid superimposition of love and death, with the element of the horrible and macabre enveloped in the sensual. Bion contributes to this tradition by transvaluing a Homeric motif, the beauty that tragically marks a warrior fallen in his prime,¹⁴ to the realm of *erôs*; Adonis' (and Pallas') beauty abiding in death, for example, is prefigured in the divine preservation of Hector's corpse (*Iliad* 24.418-20). The focalization by Adonis' lover Aphrodite, who commands the narrative viewpoint almost from the first line (although she does not actually speak until line 42), enables this thematic shift; following Bion, Virgil's style of narrative puts the reader in the place of a desirous viewer (not always to be strictly identified with a stated viewer like Nisus or Aeneas). His erotic death-imagery will in turn become part of later epic: the death of Statius' Parthenopaeus combines studied readings of Euryalus, Pallas, and Camilla (*Thebaid* 9.877-85); the death of Silius' Sarmens telescopes that of Euryalus (*Punica* 4.203-5), his Bibulus follows Camilla (7.631-3), and his Cinyps combines details from all four of Virgil's figures (12.225-50).

12. Thomas 1986: 188-9 = 1999: 130-32 (on Virgil's practice): «the very close adaptation of a model, noticeably interrupted in order to allow reference back to the source of that model».

13. Clua 1988: 93-4; cf. 1992: 63.

14. This is the usual connotation of καλός of warriors in early Greek poetry; see *Il.* 22.71-3, 21.108-10 (cf. 22.370); Tyrt. fr. 10.27-30 West.

The special status of Euryalus and the others is thrown into relief by comparison with another death for which Virgil uses imagery from the *Epitaph on Adonis*, that of Misenus at 6.218-24:

pars calidos latices et aëna undantia flammis
expediunt, corpusque lavant frigentis et unguunt.
fit gemitus. tum membra toro defleta reponunt
purpureasque super vestis, velamina nota,
coniciunt. pars ingenti subiere feretro,
triste ministerium, et subiectam more parentum
aversi tenere facem.

The image of different mourners at different tasks recalls the more rococo tableau at *Adonis* 79-85, where various Erotes (χῶ μὲν ...ὃς δέ...; cf. Virgil's *pars...pars...*) busy themselves about the bier, making offerings of their arrows, bow, and quiver and performing different funeral tasks, including the bathing of the corpse (but with a golden basin, not bronze as in Virgil).¹⁵ Even Virgil's switch between verb tenses reproduces a mannerism Bion employs there. Memory of *Adonis* 79 κέλνεται ἄβροῶς Ἄδωνις ἐν εἴμασι πορφυρέοισιν, «gorgeous Adonis lies in crimson-dyed sheets» (but literally «crimson-dyed garments»), accounts for Misenus' being placed *purpureas super vestis*.¹⁶ That those textiles are *velamina nota*—a pathetic touch, indicating that they were Misenus' own, familiar possessions («ipsi cara,» as Servius explains)—reminds us that the dead Adonis was laid out on Aphrodite's bed, upon the very sheets in which he had often passed the night with her (*Adonis* 72-3). The word for bier in 6.222, *feretrum*, attested here for the first time in verse, puns on Bion's φερέτρων «quiver» in the same metrical position at *Adonis* 82.¹⁷ The lowered torch at 6.223-4 recalls the torches that Hymenaeus douses for Adonis' wedding, frustrated by death (*Adonis* 87).

Virgil uses Bion here as thoughtfully as he does in the passages we have just noted. The description of the dead Pallas is especially comparable, particularly in details like the crimson-dyed robes (like Dido's robe that shrouds Pallas at 11.72) and the term *feretrum* (used again at 11.64, 149). Yet the focalization is different. There is nothing erotic about our view of Misenus, not even the hint of Adonis' *habrosynê* that Bion allows (79). In the lavage of the body Bion specifies Adonis' thighs (with the sentimentalizing diminutive μηρία), the locus of both his wound and erotic attraction; but Virgil's specification of the mere *corpus* of

15. This scene became a staple of artistic depictions of Adonis' death; see *LIMC* i.1.226 no. 35, Schober, Koortbojian 38. Cf. the late Anacreontean Εἰς νεκρὸν Ἄδωνιν 11-14.

16. Behind Bion and Virgil lies *Il.* 24.796 (of the cremated Hector's bones) πορφυρέοις πέπλοις καλύψαντες μαλακοῖσιν (cf. *Ad.* 72 κάτθεό νιν μαλακοῖς ἐνὶ φάρεσι).

17. On another allusive interlingual pun in the *Aeneid* see Konstan on 4.492-3. At 6.458 *sidera* doubtless puns on a now lost Callimachean σιδήρεω (cf. Catul. 66.42 *ferro*). Before Virgil *feretrum* occurs at Var. *L.* 5.166 *ubi lectus mortui fitur, dicebant feretrum nostri, Graeci φερέτρων*. Isid. 18.9.1 connects *feretrum*, φερέτρα, and *fero/φέρω*.

frigentis Misenus effectively chills any eroticism aroused by the reminiscence. *Reponunt* replaces the softer *κέκλιται*. Instead of Catullus' epithalamia (which will echo in the flower-similes Virgil provides Euryalus and Pallas), one hears Catullus' epigram on the death of his brother (101.7-10):

nunc tamen interea haec, prisco quae more parentum
tradita sunt tristi munere ad inferias,
accipe...

More parentum is in the same metrical position; Virgil's *triste ministerium* is like *tristi munere*. The themes of Catullus 101 that resonate at *Aeneid* 6.223 are ancient tradition, weary journeying, and the unresponsiveness of the deceased (Misenus—unlike his doublet in misfortune, Palinurus—never gets the chance to account for himself). Catullus' Trojan setting is the source of the *mos parentum* in Virgil; and the Odyssean intertext that the opening of Catullus' poem heralds is part of the background of Aeneas' travels too, especially now when he is about to repeat Odysseus' furthest-flung adventure. We are being prepared for the journey through the Underworld, where Aeneas will hear a thing or two about the *mores parentum* and the need to hand them down to future generations, and where all the Trojan ceremony of Misenus' exequies will come to seem etiological for the Roman funerals Anchises foretells, particularly that of Marcellus. In favor of these themes, Adonis' sensuality is blocked in Misenus.

Yet it would be a mistake to let these themes cut Misenus off from Euryalus, Lausus, Pallas, and Camilla. Those characters, too, are charged with themes of tradition and regeneration (note, for example, the emphasis on their parents' hopes) and so join Marcellus as glamorous symbols of frustrated posterity (a theme that resonates strongly in the Bionean elements Brenk finds in Anchises' lament at 6.883-4); Turnus is another such figure who is assimilated to Bion's Adonis (by Juturna's lament). Adonis himself is a powerful symbol of such frustration, and in this regard the *Aeneid* passages might be considered to enlarge upon Bion's references to the lost marriage of Adonis and Aphrodite (*Adonis* 24, 59, 87-90). In repeatedly evoking a paradigmatic description of Adonis, Virgil not only assimilates his characters to a literary paragon of beauty and untimely death, but unites a group that symbolizes the contingencies and sacrifices (or, more pessimistically, waste) involved in Aeneas' national foundation.

II

Euryalus' death-scene stands apart from the others in one respect: its borrowings from the *Adonis* join borrowings from other poems by Bion in the surrounding episode. As Nisus aims his spear at Euryalus' assailants he prays to Diana (9.404-9):

Tu, dea, tu praesens nostro succurre labori,
astrorum decus et nemorum Latonia custos...
hunc sine me turbare globum et rege tela per auras.

The prayer corresponds to *Iliad* 10.277-95 (in the Dolon episode that furnished a model for the whole escapade),¹⁸ and is the first in a series, complemented by the pair in Book 11: Metabus' prayer to Diana as he aims the spear that will carry his infant daughter Camilla to safety (11.557-60), and Arruns' prayer to Apollo as he aims his spear at Camilla and kills her (11.785-93). Why does Nisus pray to Diana? She is the protectress of woods, such as the one in which he finds himself; he alludes to this in the second of the two titles by which he calls her in 405, *nemorum custos*. She is the patron of hunters, and he is a kind of hunter as he aims. But the first phrase by which Nisus addresses her, *astrorum decus* (that is, Diana as the moon), hints at a more immediate reason: he is requesting light to aim by—ironically, when we remember that the very moonbeams he prays for were the undoing of Euryalus (374; cf. 457), and even more so against his warning to Euryalus about the approach of light at 355. Schlunk 68-74 shows that this motif gathers and reworks, with hints from the ancient commentators, a complex of motifs from *Iliad* 10.

Nisus' general status as desperate lover here activates the topos of a prayer to the moon for light by the comast, or lover on his way to importune his beloved¹⁹; moreover, the comastic undertones of his prayer have a specific model in Bion fr. 11.1-3, where a rustic comast performs a variation on this *topos* by praying to the Evening Star for light (since, as he will explain, the moon has set too early):

Ἔσπερε, τὰς ἑρατὰς χρύσειον φάος Ἀφρογενείας,
Ἔσπερε, κυανέας ἱερὸν, φίλε, νυκτὸς ἄγαλμα
τόσσον ἀφανρότερος μῆνας ὅσον ἔξοχος ἄστρον...

In κυανέας νυκτὸς ἄγαλμα, «adornment of the dark night,» we find the model for Virgil's use of *decus* at 405.²⁰ The basic sense there, «(glittering) adornment (for the body),» will occur at 10.134-5 *qualis gemma micat...aut collo decus aut capiti*; Turnus had already used the word in a celestial metaphor earlier in Book 9 (18 *Iri, decus caeli...*).²¹ Nisus' apostrophe *astrorum decus* conflates the ends of Bion's lines 2 and 3 and reinstates the moon (whose light the bucolic comast must do without) as addressee.²² Bion's νυκτὸς is possessive or objective (night holds the ornament or is adorned); in Virgil's phrase the genitive becomes partitive, with the moon understood as one of the *astra* (compare [Seneca] *Octavia* 425 *Astraea virgo, siderum magnum decus*). In the person of Nisus,

18. Pavlock 103-4.

19. Cf. Mel. *A.P.* 5.191, Ov. *Her.* 18.59-74.

20. Bion is reworking Arat. 453 ἀγάλματα νυκτὸς ἰούσης, on the constellations as «figures» (see Kidd *ad loc.*; Almirall i Sardà punningly chooses *gales de la nit que transcorre*). Two later prayers to the moon pick up Bion's phrase: [Orph.] *H.* 9.9, *PGM* 4.2786 = Heitsch 59.10.3 (4th c. A.D.).

21. The trope endures in Hor. *Saec.* 2 (Apollo and Diana) *caeli decus*; Sen. *Phaed.* 410 (the moon) *noctis decus*, which seems to reach back through Virgil to Bion; *Aetna* 70 (stars?) *decus mundi*; Apul. *Soc.* 1 *lunamque...noctis decus*.

22. Farrell 94-5 discusses Virgil's way of condensing his model's passages, combining e.g. the close of one line with the opening of the next.

Bion's comast brings out the amatory background of the doomed initiative with tragic irony. Although other circumstances of Bion's poem that might have resonated here are lost to us, we can see Virgil using a kind of allusive shorthand (I think of Pasquali's «arte allusiva»), introducing themes with great economy by recalling to the knowledgeable reader what the new work preserves and what it changes in its model.

Like Bion's Adonis, Bion's Evening Star helps connect the figures in the group reviewed above. At 8.589-91 a simile compares Pallas to the Morning Star:

...qualis ubi Oceani perfusus Lucifer unda,
quem Venus ante alios astrorum diligit ignis,
extulit os sacrum caelo tenebrasque resolvit.

Evander's son departs for war as if suffused in the light of morning, a bright symbol of promise soon to be quenched by death.²³ Senfter notes that the superlative characterization of the star (*quem Venus ante alios...*) connects Pallas with two other figures marked by beauty and early death, Lausus on the Italian side (7.649-50 *quo pulchrior alter non fuit, excepto Laurentis corpore Turni*) and Euryalus on the Trojan side (9.179-80 *quo pulchrior alter non fuit*). This characterization has been carried over to Lucifer from Hesperus, which is often described as supernally beautiful, first at *Iliad* 22.318 Ἠσπερος, ὃς κάλλιστος ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσταιται ἀστήρ.²⁴ Bion registers this commonplace in fr. 11.3 ἔξοχος ἄστρων, a phrase that Virgil, replacing the Homeric «beauty» of the star with a more personalized superlativity, conflates with fr. 11.1 φάος Ἀφρογενείας: *quem Venus ante alios astrorum diligit ignis* (one recalls the conflation of fr. 11.2-3 in 9.406 *astrorum decus*).²⁵ And it is here that, by Virgil's allusive economy, Bion's epithet «holy» appears (591 *os sacrum*). The use for the Morning Star of a precursor's words on the Evening Star incidentally advertises awareness that they are the same star (a more overt topos in Callimachus fr. 291, Meleager *Anthologia Palatina* 12.114, Cinna fr. 6, Catullus 62.34, and Horace *Carmina* 2.9.10-12).

The apostrophe to Euryalus and Nisus at 9.446-9 (*fortunati ambo!* etc.), in anticipating the one to Lausus at 10.791-3, is another link between Virgil's Adonis-figures. As a macarism pronounced over a heroic pair, it has a precedent in Bion fr. 12, where the thesis «blessed are those who love when they are loved equally in return» (line 1 ὅλβιοι οἱ φιλέοντες ἐπὶν ἴσον ἀντεράωνται) is exemplified by Theseus and Pirithous, Orestes and Pylades, and finally Achilles and Patroclus. Lyne has recorded a suggestion by Jasper Griffin that the Virgilian passage derives from the Bionean.²⁶ Bion may be the first to transfer this kind of macarism from a blessed afterlife to the blessedness of reciprocated love and to

23. Senfter 172.

24. See also Sappho fr. 104B Voigt, Catul. 62.26.

25. Bion's comparative parallel between the brightness of one star over others and that of the moon over the stars is picked up by Hor. *Carm.* 1.12.46-8 (*Iulium sidus*), Ov. *Met.* 2.722-3 (*Lucifer*).

26. Lyne 1987: 235 n. 49.

the tradition that makes paiderastic couples of heroic pairs (another Hellenistic eroticization of an epic motif); Virgil is drawing these themes into his vision of Roman history. Bion's last-named pair is especially close to the situation in the *Aeneid*: ὄλβιος ἦν θνήσκων ὅτι οἱ μόρον αἰνὸν ἄμυνεν (line 7 «blessed was [Achilles] in death, since he avenged [Patroclus'] cruel death»)—the very substance of Virgil's phrase on Nisus' death (445 *placidaque...morte quievit*) and the macarism.²⁷ Against this background Nisus' last words perform a special function (9.427-30):

me, me, adsum qui feci, in me convertite ferrum,
o Rutuli! mea fraus omnis, nihil iste nec ausus
nec potuit; caelum hoc et conscia sidera testor;
tantum infelicem nimium dilexit amicum.

The last line provisionally reverses Bion's opening thesis: Nisus declares that for being loved by his beloved, he is the opposite of *felix* (a Latin equivalent, in macarisms, to ὄλβιος and μάκαρ, as at *Georgics* 2.490 *felix qui potuit...*), since Euryalus is dead. The structure of his last sentence, on the other hand, follows that of the last sentence of Bion's comast (fr. 11.6-8):

...οὐκ ἐπὶ φωρὰν
ἔρχομαι οὐδ' ἵνα νυκτὸς ὁδοιπορόντας ἐνοχλέω,
ἀλλ' ἐράω, καλὸν δέ τ' ἐρασσάμενῳ συνέρασθαι.

In each text a pair of closely coordinated, almost semantically equivalent, negative clauses is capped by an explanatory adversative clause (οὐκ...οὐδέ... ἀλλά... ~ *nec...nec...tantum...*). The contents are also related: Nisus did in fact go on a thieving expedition by night, and he changes the denial of Bion's comast into a confession (*mea fraus omnis*).

There is a possibility that Bion's fragments 11 and 12 come from the same poem: the listing of erotic *paradeigmata* in comastic (or simply lovelorn) speeches has bucolic parallels in Theocritus 3.40-51 and [Theocritus] 20.34-43, and the two passages are stylistically related, having exceptional concentrations of artistic noun-modifier patterns.²⁸ In that case, a rustic lover who invited a heavenly body to share and support his love (Bion fr. 11.8 συνέρασθαι) and then declares that «those who love are blessed when they are loved equally in return» is pointedly replaced by a bewildered warrior inviting a heavenly body to share (*Aeneid* 9.409 *succurre*) in a desperate rescue attempt, and ending up blessed (like Bion's Achilles) only after joining in death the beloved he avenged. In a revisionary inversion of Bion's analogy, the final example in the comast's

27. For ἄμυνω in the sense «punish, avenge» see Soph. *Ph.* 602 ἔργ' ἀμύνουσιν κακά, Asclep. *A.P.* 5.7.3 τὴν δολίην ἀπάμυνον. On Achilles' revenge for Patroclus' death see Pl. *Smp.* 180A, Aeschin. *Tim.* 145.

28. See Reed 14, 51-2, 176.

catalogue (the position itself suggests an ambiguity and gloom in the Greek poem) switches places with the speaker: Bion's amatory pair becomes the heroic pair. Nisus and Euryalus are *fortunati* not just because they live on in Virgil's epic, indissolubly part of the Roman history they helped to initiate, but because their mutual love kept them together in death: bonded to a Hellenistic love-motif, the epic theme of eternal glory for which Achilles died is remade. If this reconstruction is accurate, Virgil frames the deaths of Nisus and Euryalus, from Nisus' prayer to the macarism over their corpses, as a reworking of the prayer of Bion's rustic comast, with the insertion of material from the *Adonis* in the middle helping to transform the unrequited love suffered by the comast into the loss of the beloved by violence—again, death is the fruit of love.

III

The combination of at least two Bionean poems behind the Euryalus episode encourages us to look for the influence of others, and Bion's lost mythological poems on Orpheus and Hyacinthus offer fields for at least heuristic speculation, and possible reinforcement of the general theme of tragic love. The former poem is unattested. From the fact that the *Epitaph on Bion* ([Moschus] 3) alludes to the myth of Orpheus exactly as it alludes to known mythological poems of Bion—indeed, even more insistently, since it has sections on Orpheus both at the beginning and at the end (14-18, 117-26)—Skutsch and Knaack reached the natural conclusion that Bion's anonymous epitaphist knew a poem on Orpheus by the master.²⁹ It is interesting that Virgil's Orpheus story (*Georgics* 4), particularly its tragic turning point, echoes in his story of Nisus³⁰; compare, for example, *Georgics* 4.485-91 *casus evaserat omnis...restitit...victusque animi respexit* with *Aeneid* 9.386-89 *evaserat hostis...ut stetit et frustra absentem respexit amicum...* From this perspective Nisus is cast as Orpheus, pausing and turning in fear of losing his beloved; Euryalus as Eurydice, the lost beloved. Though the potential influence from Bion is clear, specific comparisons are impossible. Hardie's observation on 9.386 that the name Euryalus sounds like Eurydice, and is its metrical equivalent, opens the way to speculation on verbal imitations that unfortunately may never be confirmed.

Certain motifs in Virgil's Orpheus narrative hint at a Bionean source. Eurydice's reproach at *Georgics* 4.494-5 «*quis et me*» inquit «*miseram et te perdidit, Orpheu, / quis tantus furor?*» is like that of Aphrodite at *Adonis* 61 τοσσοῦτον ἐμήναιο θηρὶ παλαίειν;³¹ If Virgil derived the phrase from Bion, did it come from his Aphrodite or his Eurydice—that is, did Virgil combine two of Bion's poems here, or did Bion himself use the same motif in two separate

29. See Skutsch 59-60, Knaack, Reed 27. Bion frs. 6 and 17 have connections with Orpheus and so may come from the lost poem; see Valpuesta Bermúdez 286-7; Reed 152, 192 n. 59.

30. Bleisch 187-8 collects verbal parallels between the two texts (and a third, the death of Creusa in *Aen.* 2). See also Gale.

31. Cf. [Tib.] 3.9.7-8 *quis furor est...*, in a comparison with *Adonis* (see Wilhelm 96).

poems? *Georgics* 4.469 *Manisque adiit regemque tremendum* (of Orpheus' journey to the Underworld) seems to adapt *Adonis* 51-2 ἔρχεαι εἰς Ἀχέροντα, πὰρ στυγὸν βασιλῆα καὶ ἄγριον (of Adonis)—or had Bion also used such a phrase of his Orpheus? The exclamation for Eurydice at the end of the *Georgics* narrative *Eurydicen vox ipsa et frigida lingua, / a miseram Eurydicen! anima fugiente vocabat* (4.525-6) contains a grammatical construction that also occurs at *Aeneid* 2.769-70 *Creusam / nequiquam ingeminans iterumque iterumque vocavi*: the name is both quoted exclamation and direct object of the verb. Compare *Adonis* 39 Κύπριδος αἰνὸν ἔρωτα τίς οὐκ ἔκλαυσεν ἄν αἰαῖ, where the verb governs both an exclamation and a direct object. Was there a construction of this kind also in Bion's *Orpheus*? Ovid has one (on Linus) at *Amores* 3.9.23-4, an elegy deeply influenced by Bion. The phrase *anima fugiente* at 4.526 recalls the use of *fugio* discussed above. These parallels, however, do not bring us closer to the Euryalus episode.

Hardly less elusive is any influence from the lost poem excerpted in Bion fr. 1, four lines on Apollo's grief at the death of Hyacinthus that sound like part of a longer treatment of the myth; references at *Epitaph on Bion* 6 and 26 suggest that Bion described the growth of the hyacinth flower and Apollo's lamentation.³² The analogy with Euryalus extends to both boys' deaths, caused unintentionally by their lovers. Perhaps because the description «crimson flower» was conventionally applied to the hyacinth,³³ Servius sees the metamorphosis of Hyacinthus behind the first of Euryalus' flower similes (on 9.435 *purpureus...flos*), and Ovid's studied use of *Aeneid* 9.433-7 for the death of Hyacinthus (*Metamorphoses* 10.185, 190-95, alongside echoes of Bion fr. 1) could be considered to extract a mythological subtext; Wigodsky 141 wonders if a Hellenistic treatment of the Hyacinthus myth is behind Euryalus' double simile. Pallas is overtly likened to a hyacinth (along with a violet) at 11.69, in the simile that in Bionean fashion describes his lingering beauty. Needless to say, the specific repetitions that would allow us to see how Bion works meaningfully in the new context are hard to find. One close verbal parallel is 9.424 *aut tantum potuit perferre dolorem* ~ Bion fr. 1.1 τόσον ἄλγος ἔχοντα, on the suffering experienced by the lover at the death of his beloved. There is a pointed reversal here, since whereas Bion's line describes Apollo's ἀμφασία, this is where Nisus cries out (this contrast inverts the one between the vocal wilderness through which Bion's Aphrodite wanders and the *dumi silentes* at 9.393).

Virgil's passage on the healing of Aeneas shows striking, if not uniformly interpretable, parallels with Bion's Hyacinthus fragment. *Aeneid* 12.402-4 *Phoebique potentibus herbis / nequiquam trepidat, nequiquam spicula dextra / sollicitat* recalls Apollo's futile application of all his φάρμακα (including

32. Skutsch 58, Reed 28-9.

33. Cf. Sappho (?) fr. 105B Voigt τὰν ὑάκινθον ... πόρφυρον ἄνθος, Euph. fr. 40.1 Powell = 44.1 van Groningen = 70.1 Clua πορφυρέη ὑάκινθε, Mel. A.P. 5.147.3-4 ὑάκινθον... πορφυρέην, Ov. *Met.* 13.395 *purpureum...flore*m (cf. 10.212-13), Manil. 5.257 *purpureos hyacinthos*. See Brenk 223 = 92 n. 16.

ambrosia and nectar) to Hyacinthus at Bion fr. 1.2-4; 405 *nulla viam Fortuna regit* recalls Bion's (apparent, though corrupt) reference to fate in line 4. At 419 Venus sprinkles ambrosia into Iapyx' potion—along with dittany, which at 413-14 is *puberibus caulem foliis et flore comantem purpureo*, with the phrase that can be a periphrasis for hyacinth. Iapyx is the beloved of Apollo, like Hyacinthus. Here too contamination between several models is thinkable: Iapyx' history parallels the obscure contents—a gift granted the speaker by Apollo in exchange for something—of Bion fr. 6, which might come from the lost *Orpheus*. Like that of Adonis, Aeneas' wound is apparently on his thigh; and the same goddess presides over both scenes.³⁴

IV

I wish to conclude by pressing the question of contamination as more than a source-critical problem. Virgil is not the only poet who juxtaposes borrowings from different poems of Bion. Three myths treated by him —Orpheus, Hyacinthus, and Adonis— articulate Book 10 of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where shared motifs and language point up the likenesses between them. Ovid's Hyacinthus story and Nonnus' lament over Ampelus contain reminders of both the *Adonis* and Bion fr. 1.³⁵ The tragic amatory theme common to the myths would alone have suggested such combinations, but one begins to suspect that the Smyranean poet reused more specific themes and motifs from poem to poem, not necessarily mechanically, but in a way that positively invited conflation and palimpsestic appropriations of his various myths. Later poets, in other words, may have used his recurrent motifs (the lament, for example, or floral imagery) as hinges to combine his several mythological poems and make new sense of them as subtexts of their own narratives. Among the effects of the *Aeneid*'s interpretive reordering of Bion's poetry we have especially noticed a transposition of the Greek poet's amatory themes to a martial context: the Euryalus episode brings the *Adonis* back to its warrior-models and raises the martial subjects of Bion fr. 12.7 to the forefront of the macarism, decisively bonding martial epic with Hellenistic eroticism. The mixture of love and death thus enters the Latin epic tradition, transfigured into an erotics of Roman origins.

Works cited

- AHRENS, H.L. (1854). *Bionis Smyrnaei Epitaphius Adonidis*. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner.
 — (1855). *Bucolicorum graecorum Theocriti Bionis Moschi reliquiae*. Vol. 1. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner.
 ALMIRALL I SARDÀ, J. (1996). *Arat: Fenòmens*. Barcelona: Fundació Bernat Metge.
 BARCHIESI, A. (1978). «Il lamento di Giuturna». *MD*, 1, p. 99-121.
 BLEISCH, P. (2001). «Nisus' Choice: Bovillae at *Aeneid* 9.387-8». *CQ*, 51, p. 183-9.

34. Imperial-era sarcophagi take advantage of this analogy: Koortbojian 49-62.

35. Reed 28.

- BOELLA, U. (1979). «Virgilio e Bione di Smirne». *RSC*, 27, p. 326-8.
- BRENK, F.E. (1990). «'Purpureos spargam flores': A Greek Motif in the *Aeneid*?». *CQ*, 40, p. 218-23 = (1999). *Clothed in Purple Light*. Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, p. 87-92.
- CLUA, J.A. (1988). «El *Traci* d'Euforió: mitemes, malediccions, estructures». *Ítaca*, 4, p. 83-96.
- (1992). *Euforió de Calcis: Poemes i fragments*. Barcelona: Fundació Bernat Metge.
- FANTUZZI, M. (1985). *Bionis Smyrnaei Adonidis Epitaphium*. Liverpool.
- FARRELL, J. (1991). *Vergil's Georgics and the Traditions of Ancient Epic*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- GALE, M.R. (2003). «Poetry and the Backward Glance in Virgil's *Georgics* and *Aeneid*». *TAPhA*, 133, p. 323-52.
- HARDIE, P. (1994). *Virgil: Aeneid Book IX*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- HEYNE, C.G. (1797). *P. Virgilius Maro varietate lectionis et perpetua adnotatione illustratus*. 3rd ed. 4 vols. Leipzig: Caspar Fritsch.
- HINDS, S. (1998). *Allusion and Intertext: Dynamics of Appropriation in Roman Poetry*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- KNAACK, G. (1905). «Ein verlorenes Epyll des Bion von Smyrna». *Hermes*, 40, p. 336-40.
- KONSTAN, D. (2000). «A Pun in Virgil's *Aeneid* (4.492-93)?». *CPh*, 95, p. 74-6.
- KOORTBOJIAN, M. (1995). *Myth, Meaning, and Memory on Roman Sarcophagi*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- LYNE, R.O.A.M. (1987). *Further Voices in Vergil's Aeneid*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- MARTIN, T. (1760). *Theocriti, Moschi & Bionis Idyllia graecè et latinè*. London: Impensis editoris.
- PAPANGHELIS, T.D. (1987). *Propertius: A Hellenistic Poet on Love and Death*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- PASQUALI, G. (1942). «Arte allusiva.» *L'Italia che scrive*, 25, p. 185-87 = C.F. Russo (ed.) (1994). *Pagine stravaganti di un filologo*. Vol. 2. Florence: Le lettere, p. 275-82.
- PAVLOCK, B. (1990). *Eros, Imitation, and the Epic Tradition*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.
- PICHON, R. (1902). *De sermone amatorio apud Latinos elegiarum scriptores*. Paris, p. 75-303 repr. (1966, 1991) as *Index verborum amatoriorum*. Hildesheim: Olms.
- PUTNAM, M.C.J. (1985). «Possessiveness, Sexuality and Heroism in the *Aeneid*.» *Vergilius*, 31, p. 1-21.
- REED, J.D. (1997). *Bion of Smyrna: The Fragments and the Adonis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- SCHLUNK, R. (1974). *Homeric Scholia and the Aeneid*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- SCHOBER, A. (1953). «Das Abenteuer des Adonis». In *Beiträge zur älteren europäischen Kulturgeschichte. Festschrift für R. Egger*. Vol. 2. Klagenfurt: Verlag des Geschichtsvereines für Kärnten, p. 179-84.
- SENFETER, R. (1979). «Vergil, *Aen.* 8, 589-91: Konnotationsraum und Funktionalisierung eines Vergleichs». *MD*, 2, p. 171-4.
- SKUTSCH, F. (1901). *Aus Vergils Frühzeit*. Leipzig: B.G. Teubner.
- THOMAS, R. (1986). «Virgil's *Georgics* and the Art of Reference». *HSPH*, 90, p. 171-98 = (1999). *Reading Virgil and his Texts*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, p. 114-141.
- VALPUESTA BERMÚDEZ, M. (1990). *Estudio sobre la obra literaria de Bión de Esmirna*. Diss. Sevilla.

- WIGODSKY, M. (1972). *Vergil and Early Latin Poetry*. *Hermes Einzelschriften* 24. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner.
- WILHELM, F. (1906). «Zu Augusteischen Dichtern.» *RhM*, 61, p. 91-106.
- WILLS, J. (1998). «Divided Allusion: Virgil and the *Coma Berenices*.» *HSPH*, 98, p. 277-305.